



Extensive Reading World Congress Proceedings



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Approaches to Implementing Extensive Reading under Difficult Circumstances: ERWC1 Scholarship Recipients

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The ERWC1 scholarship recipients explored implementations of Extensive Reading (ER) in their particular contexts, seeking out points of commonality and sharing their solutions to apply an ER program under adverse conditions.

Sepideh Alavi (PhD) is an assistant professor from Shiraz University, Iran. She has been using the MoodleReader to improve the reading habits of her students and involve them in a more "extensive" ER program for about a year. During her talk, she pointed out the challenges she faced when implementing ER through the MoodleReader within a curriculum with a rather traditional predisposition.

At Shiraz University, ER is only assigned to English language and literature majors. The program mainly consists of three or four pre-determined graded readers assigned to all students, each to be read in a period of four weeks. After each book is read, a 30-item quiz is administered the score of which comprises 10% of the final score, (the remaining being allocated to midterm and final intensive reading exams). Such a program does not comply with the rules of real ER, put forward by several scholars; the number of books read during the semester is too small, the time between tests is too long and all students read the same book disregarding their reading level. Using the MoodleReader appeared to be a good alternative to the traditional program and a practical solution for these issues. It was not without its problems though.

These problems and how they were tackled were briefly discussed in terms of the four key elements of a language learning situation: context, textbook, teacher and the students.

Context

The MoodleReader is a highly computerized program requiring sufficient computer literacy on the part of the instructor and students. It assumes high-performance computers and high-speed internet connectivity, all of which can be difficult to provide in small schools and universities. Nevertheless, it can be used with limited equipment and facilities if small numbers of students are involved. In addition, using the program is not limited to school hours, so users can access the website through additional resources out of the school.

Textbooks

Another pre-requisite for implementing the MoodleReader is a sufficiently large library of graded readers with enough titles for every student and every level. This could be costly and difficult to assemble, maintain, and accommodate. These problems can be solved by starting with a small collection of books in a single shelf in the teachers' room and asking students to help with the book-keeping and to donate a book they have bought and read, if they can. Approaching publishers and asking them to contribute can sometimes be very helpful too!

Teachers and Students

To teach ER, teachers should be extensive readers themselves. They also need to be motivated